



FRISCO COMMUNITY THEATRE

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TO: Mr. Frank McIlwain
Chairman
2015 Citizens Bond Committee

My name is Howard Korn. I am President of the Frisco Community Theatre (FCT) and I attended the Citizens Bond Committee meeting on 1/19/15. Although I speak only for myself in this communication, I believe other local arts groups would share my views. A fast growing community such as ours must have a vibrant arts component to enhance the quality of life in Frisco and to continue to attract new businesses and residents. In the last four years, since the creation of the Black Box Theater in the Frisco Discovery Center, FCT has had wonderful reception of our productions, often selling out performances. The citizens clearly want and appreciate the arts.

The purpose of this letter is to 1. Correct a misconception, 2. Provide specifics and 3. Endorse a feasibility study:

1. Evidently, because of a question contained in a survey by a local newspaper, a misconception was created that the local arts groups wanted a 700-800 seat theater. That is not the case. It is true that the small to mid-sized community groups within Frisco are having difficulty using the current 100 seat facility. This is due to a lack of adequate space, available dates and multiple events scheduled on the same day to keep up with the demand which has far exceeded expectations.
2. Some members of the Citizens Bond Committee expressed concern about a lack of specificity in the request for a bond package for the arts. Following is what we feel the City of Frisco needs in the way of a local Performing Arts Center:

A true Black Box Theater seating 125 – 150 with flexible seating patterns, adequate lighting, 20 foot ceilings, a catwalk, etc.;

A proscenium stage “real” theater seating 250 – 300 with theater lighting, wings, curtain, etc. for larger productions.

These facilities should be totally dedicated to theatrical productions so there would be no need to frequently dismantle and rebuild sets during a run. (Typically, we now have to do this 6 times during a 10 performance run which creates safety issues, is time consuming and expensive.) The venue should be managed by experienced theater professionals, with local companies having first choice of dates, paying minimal or no rent. Non local companies would be able to rent the facilities if not being used by a local company.

The theaters would have sound and light equipment, dressing rooms with backstage restrooms, rehearsal space, scene shop for construction of sets, storage area for necessary on site materials, theater lobby with box office, concession area, adequate public restrooms, seated waiting area for audiences prior to opening the house and adequate parking including close by handicap parking.

The Frisco Performing Arts Center (FPAC) could be located on the property fronting on the N. Dallas Parkway between the Frisco Discovery Center (FDC) and the road. In that way, parking could be shared with the FDC and we would effectively create our own Arts District. The Black

Box Theater in the FDC would be available for the many activities that now use that facility such as business meetings, parties, receptions etc. as well as for overflow productions when dates could not be booked into the FPAC.

We believe the FPAC could be created with the proceeds from the \$10 million bond issue recommended by city staff augmented by the \$4 million still available from the earlier bond issue.

3. None the less, we agree with Tammy Meinershagen, 2015 Bond Committee Member, that a Frisco-centric feasibility study must be done to determine the optimum size and scope of a performing arts facility in Frisco. Ms. Meinershagen presented the need for a facility that could benefit all arts groups. We hope that the Bond Committee will recommend to the Council not a premature number of seats or size for a performing arts center, but a significant amount of bonds to be used towards a future arts center which will require careful planning and input from community groups. We would like to see the city staff adopt this project as part of the future of Frisco and a feasibility study done before any decision is made about specifics.

Eventually, we expect there will be multiple facilities within Frisco to service the many different types of fine arts needs. This is not dissimilar to the fact that there are many different types of sports facilities in Frisco to accommodate the variety of sports organizations. There is no one-building that can do it all for sports, and that is the same for the arts.

I would appreciate it if this letter could be distributed to members of the committee before a final recommendation is prepared to send to the City Council. Thank you for allowing me to provide input to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Howard Korn

Howard Korn
President

